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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT PROMOTING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Agency Will Empower Women for Better Health Care

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is introducing Caroline Andrew as the first chair of Echo, Ontario's new women's health agency, which will raise awareness and work toward solutions on women's health issues, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"As an agency promoting women's health like no other, Echo will benefit mothers and daughters all across Ontario," Smitherman said. "I know Caroline Andrew will be a great asset to the agency as she brings a wealth of experience and passion to issues facing women."

Caroline Andrew has been with the University of Ottawa since 1971. A former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (1997 to 2005), she is currently a full professor at the School of Political Studies and the Director of the Centre on Governance. She is a nationally recognized authority on urban and feminist studies as well as on cultural diversity.

"Key to improving women's lives is a health care system that recognizes women's health needs," said Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello. "Today's announcement supports the McGuinty government's commitment to making positive change for women."

"I am honoured to be named the chair of such an important agency," said Andrew. "I welcome the opportunity to lead Echo, which will promote equity and improved health for the women of Ontario by working in partnerships with the health system, the community, researchers and policy stakeholders"

Echo's role will be to:

- Conduct, fund and partner on research initiatives in women's health
- Provide input to government policy, in collaboration with stakeholders, to improve the health status of women, and promote the provision of accessible, effective and equitable care for women
- Collect and distribute information on women's health through a variety of communication tools and services.
- Advise the minister on health issues affecting women

When fully operational Echo will receive annual funding of $7.6 million.

Echo will use the work of the former Women's Health Council as a foundation for the start-up of the new agency. Echo will assume new responsibilities and bring together health system, community, research, and policy stakeholders.

Minister Smitherman also announced the full membership of the Echo board:

- Dr. Sonia Anand, Associate Professor of Medicine at McMaster University
- Elizabeth (Libby) Burnham QC, Counsel, Morrison Brown Sosnovitch
- Meredith Cartwright, Venture Capitalist and part-time lecturer of Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto
- Aisha Chaudry, Counsel, Kutty, Syed and Mohammed Barristers and Solicitors
- Dr. Shaheen A. Darani, Staff Psychiatrist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Dr. Carol Herbert, Dean of Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario
- Dr. Jack Kitts, CEO of The Ottawa Hospital
- Valerie Monague, Director of Social Development for the Union of Ontario Indians
- Marianne Park, Instructor of the Dynamics of Domestic Violence at the Ontario Police College
- Wendy Talbot, Executive Director, Norwest Community Health Centres in Thunder Bay
- Rita Tsang, President and CEO Tour East Holidays
- Dr. Madina Wasuge, Executive Director for Hamilton's Centre for Civic Inclusion

This is the latest example of how the McGuinty government is on the side of Ontario families who want improved health care for women. Other initiatives include:

- Launching a life-saving HPV immunization program for 84,000 young women in Grade 8
- Restoring independent governance to Women's College Hospital, which will become a state of the art ambulatory care centre for women
- Implementing three new hospital-based programs providing 24/7 emergency treatment for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, in Dryden, Kingston and Thunder Bay, bringing the total to 34 sexual assault/domestic violence treatment centres in Ontario
- Supporting the growth of midwifery in Ontario by expanding the seats in Ontario universities for midwifery training from 60 to 90, and investing an additional $12.2 million to provide improved access to midwifery services.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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